

REMARKS

The objection to the drawings has been addressed by amending paragraphs 25 and 28. The specification has been rewritten, as requested. A substitute specification will be provided, if needed. Claims 5 and 16 have been cancelled. Withdrawal of all of the objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 12-15 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Glinz et al. '976 and Akiyoshi et al. '421. Independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended to include the features of claims 5 (and 4) and 16 (and 15), rendering this rejection moot. However, claims 5 and 16 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Glinz et al., Akiyoshi et al. and Osada et al. '810. Applicants traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 12 now recite that the cross-sectional shape of the annular body varies in the tire circumferential direction. The band 30 in Fig. 6 of Akiyoshi et al. '421 changes the cross-sectional area of the cavity portion, but the band 30 itself does not appear to change in cross-sectional shape. Moreover, claims 1 and 12 now recite that the annular body is made of several pieces. The examiner relies on Osada for this feature, but Osada also discloses a run-flat support, which would not likely be used for noise reduction. Even if it were used for noise reduction, the shape could not be changed. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-7, 10-11, 17-18 and 21-22 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Glinz et al. and Flament et al. '849. Independent claims 6 and 17 have been amended to overcome this rejection, and applicants traverse for the following reasons.

Claims 6 and 17 now recite a tire/wheel assembly equally sectioned into four regions with two regions having a maximum total opening area and the other two regions having a minimum total opening area. Although Flament does disclose a tire/wheel assembly having openings that are unevenly distributed, there is no suggestion of the configuration in the present invention. Such a configuration produces a significant reduction in road noise as shown in Table 1. Consequently, neither Glinz nor Flament suggest a tire/wheel assembly that could produce similar results.

Claims 8-9 and 19-20 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Glinz et al., Flament, and Osada. The features of claims 9 and 20 have been incorporated into independent claims 6 and 17. Claims 8 and 19 have been canceled and replaced with new claims 23-26. Applicants traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Osada et al. '810 shows such a protector Fp for supporting a tire when punctured which is composed of four identical protector elements 14 equally sectioned in a circumferential direction, which differs from the annular body of a noise reduction interior member sectioned equally into four differently shaped sections in the circumferential direction according to the present invention.

Thus, Osada et al. is completely devoid of a teaching that four regions of the annular body equally sectioned in the circumferential direction are composed of one region having a maximum cross-sectional area of the openings and another region having a minimum cross-sectional area of the openings. The regions in the present invention are alternately arranged, so that the effect of noise reduction is enhanced. Withdrawal is

requested.

The rejection of claims 8-9 and 19-20 are traversed for the reasons given with respect to independent claims 16 and 17. Withdrawal is requested.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By 

Patrick G. Burns
Registration No. 29,367

January 17, 2008

300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315

Customer No. 24978